United Nations

# Daily Highlights

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## MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General, "deeply concerned about recent security incidents" decides to assign United Nations guards in Iraq to protect convoys transporting humanitarian supplies in northern part of that country.

+ Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Haiti, Dante Caputo, after briefings in New York and Washington, meets in Port-au-Prince with Haitian leaders; expected to report back to Secretary-General in New York tomorrow.

+ Security Council condemns recent mass deportation of Palestinian civilians from occupied territories by Israel and asks Secretary-General to consider sending envoy to area to follow up on situation.

+ Head of UNRWA urges Lebanon to lift order for suspension of Agency's help to deported Palestinians; in related news, he expresses concern over increasing food shortages in Gaza Strip due to curfew imposed by Israel.

+ Joint United States/United Nations military operation in Somalia proceeding "generally as planned"; Mogadishu seaport now open and relief supplies are moving throughout city, according to United States report.

+ Secretary-General to launch hot-air balloon called "The Drop of Hope" -- symbol of role of non-governmental organizations in sustainable development -- from United Nations Garden tomorrow afternoon.

+ World Food Programme warns of impending food crisis in former Yugoslavia; appeals for additional pledges to its emergency operations.

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"Deeply concerned about recent security incidents" affecting World Food Programme humanitarian relief convoys in northern Iraq, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has decided to assign United Nations guards to strengthen the protection of the convoys in that part of the country.

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For information media—not an official record

According to a statement issued by a United Nations spokesman today, the transportation route from Turkey to the three northern governants in Iraq was a vital component in the provision of relief to the area. Under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the United Nations and the Iraqi Government, Iraq had agreed to take all required measures to facilitate the safe and rapid passage as well as delivery of humanitarian assistance commodities through the country. Since the operation began in mid-November, 25 convoys with 410 trucks have brought more than 8,000 metric tonnes of much needed flour, seeds and fuel to the area.

However, within the last month, there had been three serious incidents involving the security of the trucks going through Government-controlled areas. The spokesman said that in each of these instances, the Representative of the Secretary-General in Iraq, Assistant Secretary-General Richard Foran, had brought the matter to the attention of the Government, called for an immediate investigation and emphasized the responsibility of the Government to ensure the necessary security.

Recognizing the critical importance of maintaining the flow of humanitarian relief supplies to those in need in northern Iraq, especially during the winter months, and following contacts with the Government of Iraq, the Secretary-General had decided to make further use of the United Nations guards to enhance security of the convoys, the statement said.

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The Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Haiti, Dante Caputo, arrived with his team in Port-au-Prince, Haiti on Saturday, 19 December, a United Nations official said today.

Over the weekend, Mr. Caputo held meetings with the head of the de facto government, Marc Bazin; the Coordinator of the Presidential Commission, Father Antoine Adrien, and the members of the Commission; the President of the Chamber of Deputies, Alexandre Medard; the head of the Organization of American States (OAS) civilian mission, Colin Granderson; Rene Theodore, the Prime Minister designated at the time of the Washington agreement in February, and members of the diplomatic corps.

Today, Mr. Caputo will meet with the President of the Senate, Dejean Belizaire, the Commander in Chief of the armed forces, General Raoul Cedras, and members of human rights organizations.

He will return to New York this evening and tomorrow will be reporting orally to the Secretary-General on this first round of discussions. Last week, before leaving for Haiti, Mr. Caputo visited New York and Washington, where he met with President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

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The Security Council, at a formal meeting held Friday night, 18 December, strongly condemned the recent mass deportation of Palestinian civilians from

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the occupied territories by Israel and asked the Secretary-General to consider sending an envoy to the area to follow up on the serious situation there and to report to the Council. In adopting unanimously resolution 799 (1992), the Council further demanded that Israel ensure the safe and immediate return of all those deported.

The text affirmed that the deportation constitutes a contravention of Israel's obligations under the 1949 Geneva Convention which is applicable to all the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem. Article 49 of the that Convention states that "individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the occupying Power or to that of any other country, occupied or not, are prohibited, regardless of their motive".

The Council also reaffirmed, under the resolution, the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon -- the country to which the Palestinians have been deported.

The observer for Palestine, M. Nasser Al-Kidwa said the Palestinian people could not participate in the peace process while Israel continued its policy of deportations. They could not participate in a process that was going nowhere and was used by the other side as a smokescreen for its actions.

In his statement to the Council, the representative of Israel, Gad Yaacobi, said "Israel remains fully committed to the quest for peace. We shall not withdraw from the peace talks". He believed that the majority of people in the Middle East hoped to depart from the path of conflict and violence, but the goals of terrorist organizations such as Islamic Jihad and Hamas was to kill Israelis and kill the peace process. Israel remained committed to the dual goals of peace and war against terrorism.

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In a related development, Ilter Turkmen, Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has called upon the Lebanese Government to reconsider its decision to ask agencies providing emergency assistance to the deportees to suspend their relief operations. The decision was announced following the Government's move to push some 400 Palestinians, deported last week by Israel, further south into Israeli-controlled Lebanese territory.

Mr. Turkmen expressed concern about "the potential for increased suffering and loss of life which this decision might cause". He said the decision to terminate UNRWA's emergency relief operations and to push the deportees southwards had come as "a regrettable surprise". The Commissioner-General has written to the Lebanese Prime Minister, Rafiq al Hariri, urging him to reconsider the order and to allow UNRWA to resume its temporary emergency humanitarian operation.

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Among the deportees are 16 employees of the Agency, 11 from the Gaza Strip and five from the West Bank. All but two of them are teachers in UNRWA schools.

In other related news, the deteriorating situation in the Gaza Strip has prompted Mr. Turkmen to call on the Israeli authorities to allow UNRWA to provide emergency food assistance to people in the region. It was sealed off by the Israeli authorities on 8 December and a round-the clock curfew was imposed in most areas on 13 December.

In a press release issued yesterday, the Commissioner-General said most of Gaza's 750,000 inhabitants were confined to their homes -- a situation which was causing economic and social disruption. The Agency had received many requests from Palestinians in Gaza to help alleviate the worsening food shortage, he said.

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The joint United State/United Nations military operation in Somalia is proceeding "generally as planned", primarily due to the ability of the Somalia port and airfield structure to support the deployment of the Unified Task Force (UNITAF), according to a report submitted by the United States.

Citing preliminary indications from relief organizations on the ground that security operations have been "very successful", the report says the seaport in Mogadishu is now open and relief supplies are moving throughout the city.

The rapid and extensive response of United Nations Member States to the Security Council resolution, allowing use of force to ensure deliveries of humanitarian aid to Somalia, and the recent cease-fire agreement between the two major Somali factions, are "possitive indications that the operation will continue successfully", the report says.

It describes the concept of operations developed by the Commander-In-Chief of the United States Central Command which focuses on the areas of greatest need and suffering -- Mogadishu, Baledogle, Baidoa and Kismayo, among others. The United States forces will build to approximately 28,000 personnel, augmented with UNITAF forces from the 20 countries that have committed to provide over 17,000 personnel to date.

The report was transmitted in a letter to the President of the Security Council, dated 17 December, from the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Edward J. Perkins.
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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali will launch a hot-air balloon called "The Drop of Hope" from the United Nations Garden tomorrow afternoon, 22 December.

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The launching of the water-drop-shaped balloon will mark the efforts of non-governmental organizations at the current session of the General Assembly, leading to the recognition of their collective voices in the United Nations Commission of Sustainable Development. The main task of this high-level Commission is to monitor how countries implement Assembly resolutions, based on the Rio agreements, that are to become the blueprint for environmentally sound development.

Last June, "The Drop of Hope" was launched in Rio de Janeiro during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). Financed by private companies, Governments, non-governmental organizations and local communities, it is used to sensitize and educate the public on environmental matters in general and on the problems of drinking water in particular.

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The World Food Programme (WFP) has warned that the food supply situation in the former Yugoslav republics will become critical over the winter months if donors do not quickly make additional pledges of relief food for WFP's emergency operations.

Following the United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Programme of Action and Appeal for former Yugoslavia, WFP was requested to carry out a major humanitarian operation in six former Yugoslav republics. The operation, which began early last November, covers the supply of basic needs of over 3 million refugees, displaced people and malnourished infants and children.

To date, however, pledges from the international community cover only half the requirements for the winter period from January to March 1993. No pledges have been made for spring 1993. Relief food stocks in regional warehouses are now extremely low and there is virtually no buffer stock to cushion against an expected break in the pipeline in late January.

Over the next six weeks, a total of 31,000 tonnes of food will be delivered by WFP to Lubjana, Zagreb, Split, Belgrade, Titograd and Skopje. But no further tranches are expected to arrive until mid-February. The crisis will be particularly severe in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with its 1.6 million refugees and displaced persons.

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